

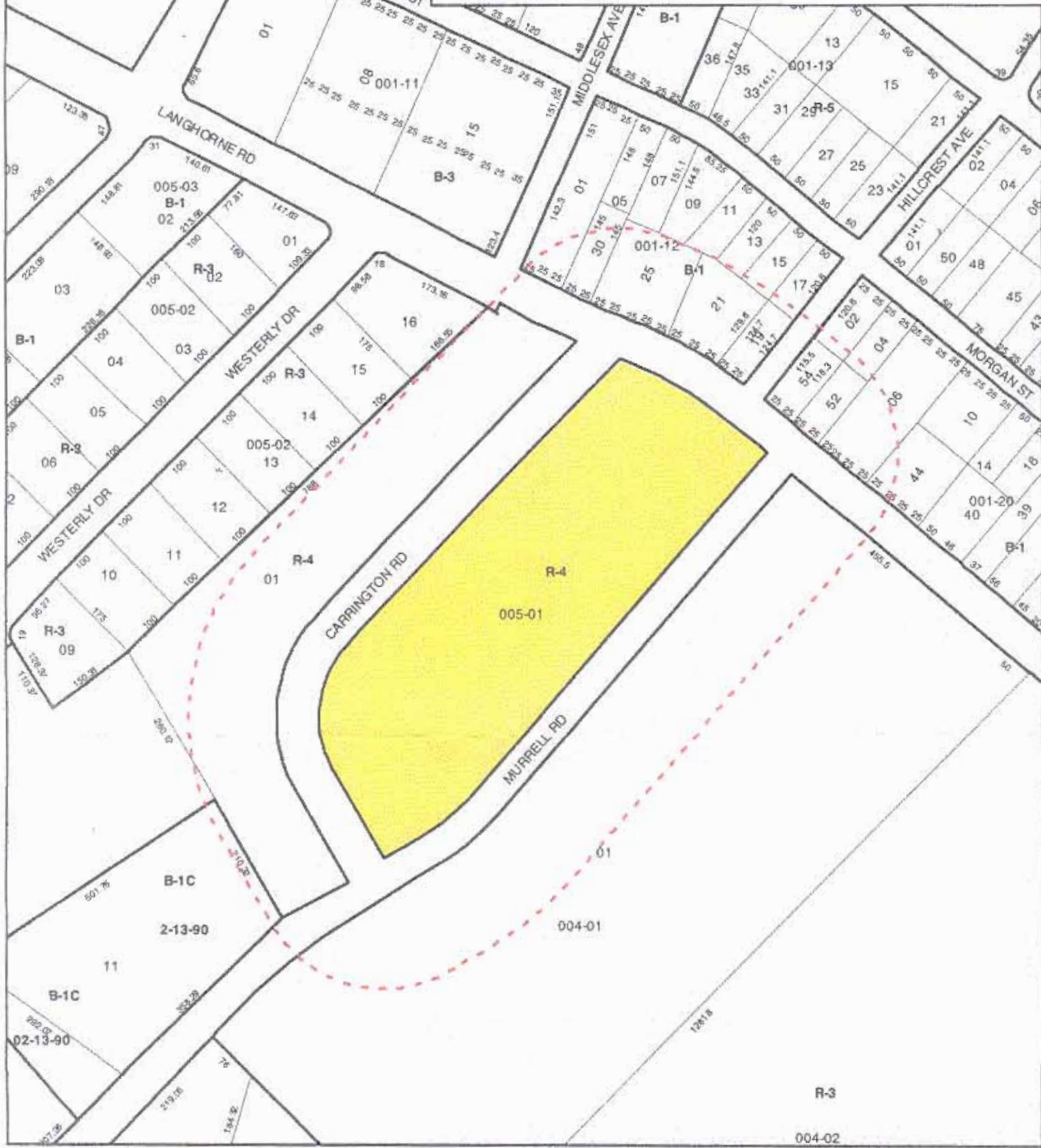
WALGREENS

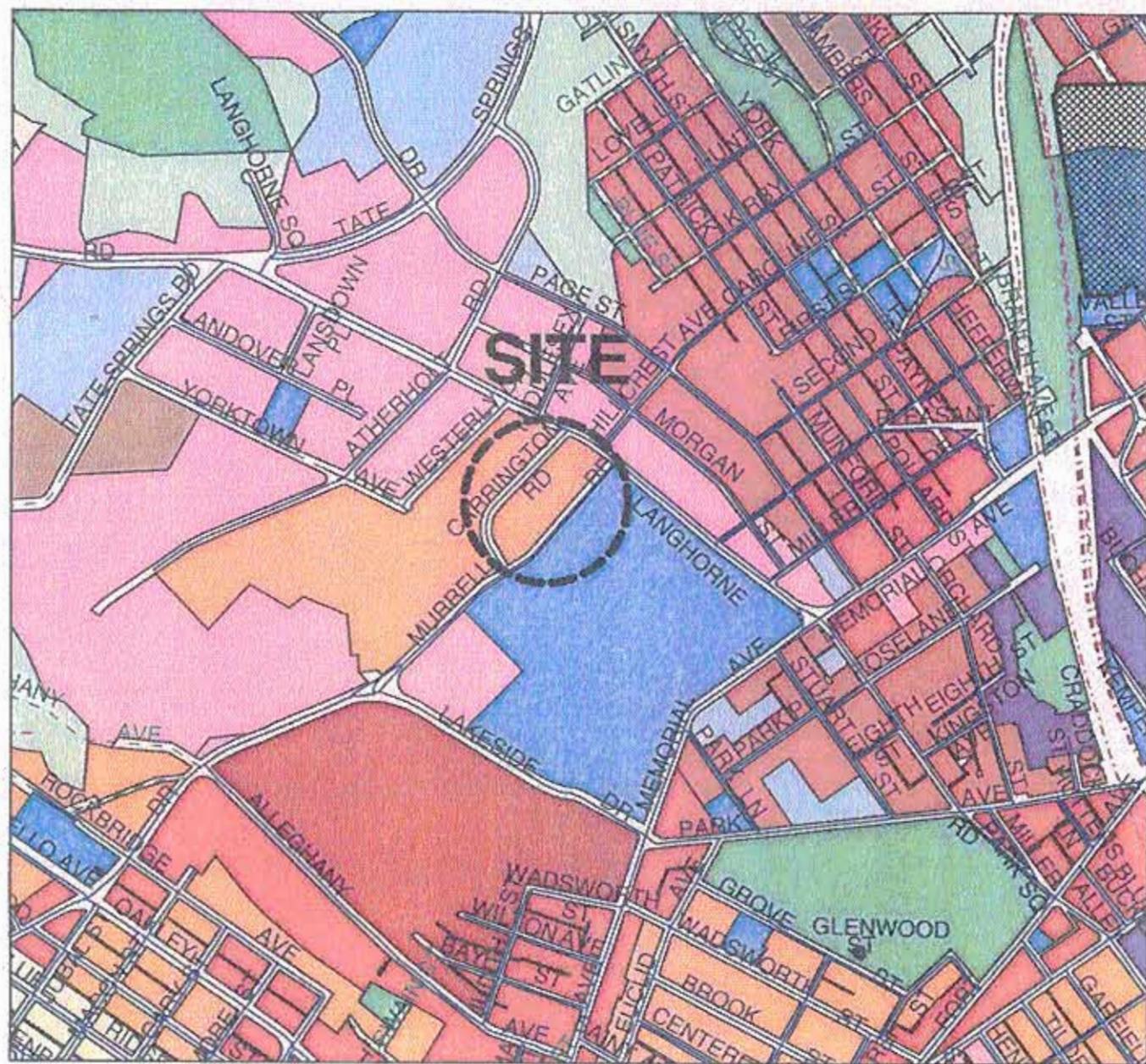
Langhome Road at Murrell Road

Zoning Request from R-4 to B-3C
Petitioner: Village Oaks Associates LPMAP PREPARED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMUNITY PLANNING & DEVELOPMENT

Subject Property

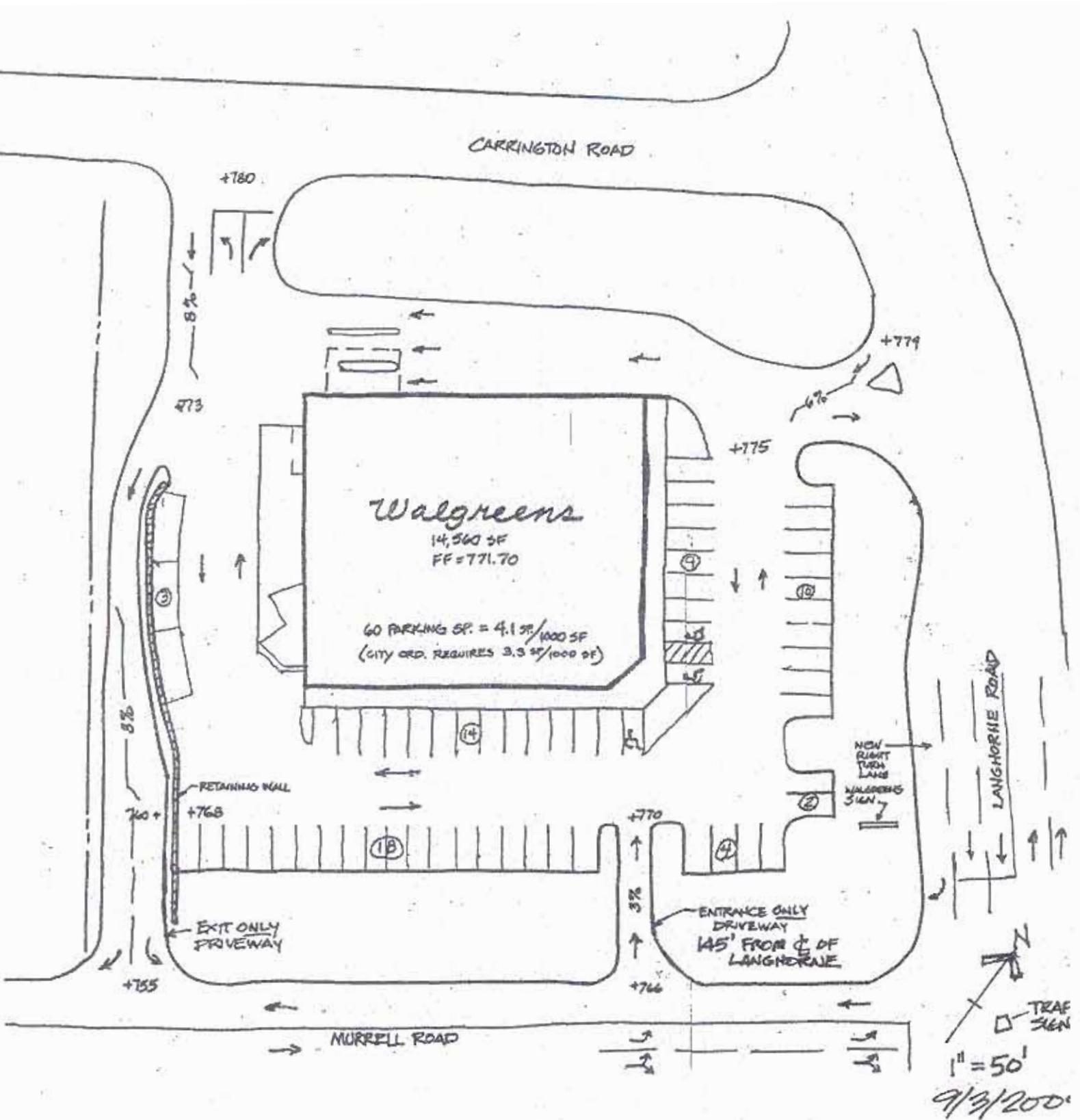
200 ft Radius





WALGREENS LANGHORNE ROAD LAND USE PLAN





ASG
INCORPORATED

ARCHITECTURAL SERVICES
GROUP, INCORPORATED
"A Tennessee Architectural
& Engineering Corporation"
PHONE: (865) 470-8668
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A NEW RETAIL STORE FOR
Walgreens
STORE #
N.W.C. of Langhorne Rd. and Murrell Rd.
LYNCHBURG, VIRGINIA
DEVELOPER/OWNER
Laird Lynchburg, LLC

a national trust publication

Better Models for Chain Drugstores

By Anne Stillman



Reuse of Non-Historic Buildings

Many towns have large vacant commercial buildings formerly occupied by supermarkets or similar businesses. These can work well for chain drugstores, since they usually have both the required square footage and adequate parking. Such reuse does not result in enhanced design, nor does it revives otherwise empty buildings and avoid further disruption of a historic downtown. By using existing buildings in or near the center of town, they also avoid contributing to suburban sprawl.



Brooks, a regional chain operating in New England, opened in a former Shop and Save supermarket in Waterville, Maine's Old Corner, a shopping center directly behind the downtown business district. The back entrances of the stores fronting Main Street open onto the concourse. The city recently designed sidewalks and other amenities for pedestrians to help connect the concourse to the compact downtown. Brooks has reused an empty building while keeping its parking in easy walking distance of Main Street.

Photo by Elizabeth Davidson



Walgreens reused a 12,000-square-foot former grocery store in Cuyahoga Falls, Ohio. The building was a simple concrete box with no detail, and Walgreens remodeled it to look like one of the chain's typical buildings; however, the store cuts the sidewalk and does not interrupt the streetscape with parking in front. It represents a better site plan, but not a better-store design. The project used the 10 percent rehabilitation tax credit for nonresidential commercial buildings built before 1936.

Photo by Paul Konrich

The building is unique, because the design was subject to approval by the city's Board of Architectural Review. Without question this process produced more attractive buildings and one more suited to its setting than a typical Run-Of-the-Mill model would have been.

The building's design suggests the appearance of the traditional 19th-century brick warehouses that used to be located in the district and can still be found near the river. While the use of brick enhances the building's appearance, it was not enough to integrate the building with its surroundings. Instead, the architects gave the building a distinctive design that included six tall windows across the facade, a gabled roofline, and recessed arches in the sand-brick walls that recall the detailing of 19th-century industrial architecture.

Not only is the design of the building more suitable to the neighborhood than a typical chain drugstore, its position on the block is more appropriate as well. Instead of the typical wrap-around parking lot, which sets the building back from the street and disrupts the streetscape, the parking is on the side. The city's board of architectural review insisted that the building could not be set back from the corner with parking in between. The gas station was demolished to create a parking lot for about 50 cars on the side of the building, away from the corner. The store goes up along the sidewalk, as used to be customary in pre-war commercial districts.

Tommy Smith of Smith Gobet Associates, the architect for the project, called Walgreens a good corporate partner, but felt that without architectural

concerns to not implement them effectively. Without the persuasive arguments of well-informed citizens the close vote might have gone the other way. By voicing their objections and emphasizing the relevant portions of the regulations, citizens encouraged the commissioners to reject a site plan that did not fit the city's vision. As a result, the developer and his team went back to the drawing board, in more time and came up with a better design and site plan for Burlington.

Walgreens Builds in Brookline, Massachusetts

Brookline, Mass., a town that prides itself on protecting its history and character, obtained one of the most successful new designs anywhere for a chain. In 1993, Walgreens approached the town's planning commission, which at the time had no zoning or design review. The community places a high value on the preservation of historic buildings, neighborhoods, and green spaces...," reads the official Brookline web site, and the town's land-use regulations wisely reflect this sentiment.

A suburb adjacent to Boston with about 30,000 residents, the character of the town is quite clear in many areas, although it still uses the early New England form of government of selectmen and town meeting (now a representative town meeting). Harvard Street is a broad, perspective, exponential-liaisoning, a desirable location for any retailer to protect the street from inappropriate development. Brookline requires design review for all buildings fronting residential streets and special use permits for stores larger than 5,000 square feet.

When a developer wanted to build a new 12,000-square-foot Walgreens at the corner of Harvard Street and Aspinwall Avenue, he realized the benefits

of meeting with neighborhood residents to solicit input before submitting his plans to the town land-use board. Many residents live within walking distance of the site and an elementary school is located diagonally across the street.

After meeting with the neighborhood for the first time in June 1994, the developer consulted with the Design Advisory Team a few times and later held another session for residents. (The Brookline Planning Board appoints architects and design professionals to the Design Advisory Team for the duration of a given project.) The Planning Board then reviewed the application on two separate dates before recommending final approval with design stipulations to the Board of Appeals. Although a lengthy procedure, the thoughtfulness of the process resulted in a new drugstore that is compatible with the existing vernacular architecture and the walkability of the street.

From the street the brick-veneer building appears to be two stories high, and it has a wide sidewalk immediately the streetscape. The architect added a contrasting corner bay for architectural interest. The first-floor windows resemble the large display windows that merchants used to prefer until car-oriented shopping reduced the significance of window display and retailing turned inward. The second floor has a row of windows; however, though the upper story is divided to storage.

The building sits on a raised causeway at the street and steps between Harvard Street and Aspinwall Avenue, with a small stone wall. A wide, paved ramp with black pavers separates the sidewalk from the parking area, further obscuring the visual impact of

the lot. The bus stops at the corner, and the developer provided a bench with an awning above an canopy for people waiting for the bus.

The Walgreens drugstore replaced a gas station and automobile repair shop. The Planning Board felt that the drugstore was a more desirable use of the site. Nevertheless, the developer understood that the proposal had to meet the town's high standards for design and site planning.

A typical Walgreens single-story building with very few windows sitting in the middle of a parking lot would probably fit in on Harvard Street, but would it have met with town approval? Design review, restricting larger retail operations to special use permits, neighborhood input, and the cooperation of the developer combined to make the difference. Brookline attained a new drugstore that blends into rather than disrupts this key corner in town.

The design of Walgreens on Harvard Street, Brookline, shows compatibility with the existing commercial architecture and walkable quality of the street.
Photo by Jeffrey Harris





KNOXVILLE, TN



Louisville, KY